

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The amendment to Claim 1 is supported by original Claim 2. Similarly, new Claims 5 and 6 are supported by original Claim 2. New Claims 7-11 and 13-14 are supported by original Claim 1 and by the paragraph bridging specification pages 14-15. New Claim 12 is supported by specification page 12, lines 6-7. New Claim 15 is supported by specification page 1 lines 1-5 and, e.g., Example 1 at specification pages 17-18. New Claim 16 is supported by the several Examples, particularly Examples 1 and 4. New Claim 17 is supported at specification page 16, lines 6-8. No new matter has been entered.

Applicants respectfully request the reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejection over Solomon. As noted by the above amendment to Claim 1, in Applicants' method for activating a surface of a metal member a carbon donor compound selected from the group consisting of acetylene and ethylene is used in combination with ammonia. Such a mixture is neither described nor suggested in Solomon.

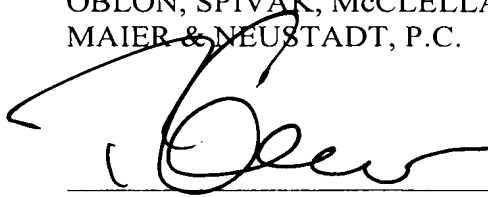
As recognized in the Official Action, Solomon relates to a process for carburizing steel and, in that sense, is not directed to the presently claimed method for activating the surface of a metal member by the action of catalytically formed HCN, which is a pretreatment typically occurring before the metal member is, e.g., nitrided or carburized. See, e.g., specification page 1, paragraph [0001] and new Claim 15. Moreover, and regardless of what Applicants' method is called or when it occurs, Solomon does not describe a method comprising heating a mixed gas of ammonia and a carbon donor compound selected from the group consisting of acetylene and ethylene. Instead, Solomon's carburizing atmosphere relies upon hydrocarbon components such as methane, propane, butane and pentane. See column 5, lines 34-48 of Solomon.

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Accordingly, and because Solomon neither discloses nor suggests a method for activating a surface of a metal member as presently claimed Applicants respectfully request the reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejection, and the passage of this case to Issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Treanor', is written over a horizontal line.

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